

prescription drug benefit for all seniors. Once we've done that, we can move forward with a sensible tax cut.

I commend the supporters of this amendment because I believe it reflects good policy, the will of the American people, and addresses a long-standing unmet need. We should not be

recklessly spending money on an excessive tax cut before we take action to ensure that all seniors have the potentially life-saving choice of a prescription drug benefit. It is my hope that every Member of the Senate will support this critically important amendment.

## Statement on the Supplemental Budget Request

*April 4, 2000*

I am very disappointed that Senator Lott plans to deny prompt consideration of the urgent and essential needs in my 2000 supplemental request, including helping victims of Hurricane Floyd, providing energy assistance for families struggling with rising oil prices, helping keep illegal drugs out of our country by supporting the Colombian Government's fight against drug traffickers, and building peace and stability in Kosovo to support the efforts of our troops there without jeopardizing our current state of military readiness worldwide. It is also

essential to provide debt relief for the world's poorest nations undertaking economic reforms so that they can join the global economy.

I firmly believe that any action to delay consideration of these pressing needs would impose unnecessary costs to Americans at home, to our interests abroad, and to our military readiness around the world. Therefore, I urge the Senate to consider the interests of the Nation and to move ahead quickly with work on these urgent and essential needs.

## Message to the Congress Transmitting the Report of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting

*April 4, 2000*

*To the Congress of the United States:*

As required by section 19(3) of the Public Telecommunications Act of 1992 (Public Law

102-356), I transmit herewith the report of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,  
April 4, 2000.

## Remarks at a Reception for Senator Patrick J. Leahy

*April 4, 2000*

Thank you. Well, first, let me say to Bobby and Solange, thank you for having us in your home. I actually came to hear you sing, Emmylou, so you've got sing for me when I finish.

I want to thank Pat and Marcelle for being wonderful friends to me and to Hillary during our sojourn here in Washington. I may have been younger than you when I got here, but I'll be older when I leave. *[Laughter]* I want to thank Senator Reid for being here. My great

friend and former Senator DeConcini, thank you, sir, for being here.

I want to thank all of you for being here for Pat Leahy. I have been in public life now for more than 25 years. I have, among other things—when I was a Governor, I served with over 150 Governors. I have known hundreds of Members of Congress. And I think that Pat Leahy is one of the ablest and most visionary legislators and one of the finest people I have ever served with in 25 years of public life.

And Mr. Axworthy, I appreciate your being here, but you can't have him. *[Laughter]* And he also, by the way, tells a pretty good joke now and then. *[Laughter]*

I'll be very brief. I think the American people are going to be tested this year in this election season and in the years ahead, because of our prosperity and because all the social indicators appear to be going in the right direction. Normally, democracies can be summoned to any sacrifice or difficult decision when people are evidently under the gun. And sometimes, therefore, they are most at risk of making foolish choices or going in the wrong direction when things seem to be going very well. In that way, groups of free people are like individuals. Most of us who are over 30, anyway, can recall at least one time in our lives when we made a serious mistake not because things were going so poorly but because things seemed to be going so well.

And I say that because I think there really are very clear choices now between the direction that someone like Pat Leahy would take in his work for peace, for the health of our children, for the health of our environment, for research or a whole range of issues, and the choice that the majority in Congress would take or their nominee for President would take.

Yet, it may seem to many voters that, oh well, there may not be much difference; things are rocking along here; the economy is on automatic. And I think it's very important that people like you get together to help people like Pat Leahy. I also think it's very important that you be able to tell your friends and neighbors who never come to political events like this why you came and what the stakes are.

And I'm old enough now where I remember things sometimes I wish I didn't remember. I was in this city 32 years ago today, when Martin Luther King was killed in Memphis, and I remember it. I was in this city 32 years ago driving

down Massachusetts Avenue, 32 years ago 5 days ago, when Lyndon Johnson told us he couldn't run for reelection because the country was split right down the middle over the Vietnam war.

What does all that have to do with this? In February we celebrated the longest economic expansion in American history. So I had all my economic team in, and we were celebrating, and we were happy. And we were happy because we also had a 20-year low in poverty, a 30-year low in unemployment, the lowest African-American and Hispanic unemployment rates ever recorded, the lowest female unemployment rate in 40 years. It was a wonderful time.

And we were talking about the State of the Union Address, where I kept saying we've got to do these big things now, these big things. And I said, "Hey, just for my information, when was the last longest economic expansion in American history?" And it turns out it was between 1961 and 1969. And I will go back to what I said in the beginning, how you're in danger, when things seem to be going well, of breaking your concentration and not making good decisions, not just individuals but nations.

I graduated from high school in 1964, when there was low inflation, low unemployment, high growth, and we thought it would go on forever. Lyndon Johnson had united the country after President Kennedy's tragic assassination, and we thought then the civil rights challenges of America would be handled in the courts, in the Congress, not in the streets. We knew that we had a few people in Vietnam, but nobody thought we'd have over 500,000 or that 58,000 would die or that it would tear the country apart.

And then 4 years later, all this stuff I just told you started to happen, so that by the time I graduated from college at Georgetown on June 8th, it was 2 days after Robert Kennedy was killed, 2 months after Martin Luther King was killed and the city burned, 9 weeks after Lyndon Johnson said he couldn't run for reelection. And a few weeks after that, President Nixon was elected on the first sort of divide-and-conquer campaign of the modern era. He represented the Silent Majority, which means people like me were in the loud minority. It was "us" and "them." And just a few months after that, the longest economic expansion in American history was history.

Now, I am very optimistic; I'm the most optimistic person in this room. But what I want

to tell you is, I have a memory, and I have waited for 35 years for my country to be in a position once again to be free to build the future of our dreams for our children, to be responsible citizens of the world, to lead the world toward peace and freedom and security. That's what this is all about. And we can't afford to let a single American treat this election in a casual fashion because of the evident responsibilities we have and because of the opportunities we have.

I know Pat Leahy is not on the ballot this year, but I'm glad you're out here helping him, because I told you the truth. In 25 years, he's one of the finest people and one of the ablest, most visionary public servants I've ever known. That's what you need to think about all year long. And tomorrow if people ask you why you

came here, you need to be able to give them this answer. And if you're around my age, you need to remind them of what happened to the last longest economic expansion in American history, when we were casual and careless enough to think it was on automatic. There's nothing we can't do. But we have to work at it, and we have to work together.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:20 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to reception hosts Robert Muller and Solange MacArthur; singer Emmylou Harris; Marcelle Leahy, wife of Senator Leahy; former Senator Dennis DeConcini; Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy of Canada; and Gov. George W. Bush of Texas.

## Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner

*April 4, 2000*

Thank you. First of all, let me say, Carol, I am very grateful for those words and for your friendship, and I thank you and David for opening your beautiful home. Nancy, thank you for being my true friend, and I thank you and Harold for being here.

People are always asking me what I am going to do when I leave office. I think tonight would be an appropriate time for me to make the announcement: David and Harold and I are going to open a consulting firm for political spouses. [*Laughter*] We're reasonable but not free. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank Joe Andrew, who came out here from Indiana and gave us a real boost of energy. He took over the leadership of the Democratic Party when most people thought it was not much of a prize. And then we got Ed Rendell to come help us, and a number of other people. But Joe was there, working day-in and day-out, and he was indefatigable, and he was enthusiastic when even someone as optimistic as me wasn't sure he should be enthusiastic. So we owe you, and we're grateful, and we thank you.

I want to thank all the people here in our administration family: Carrie, thank you for being here; Minyon; and I thank Molly Raiser

for being here, my former Protocol Chief; and Ann Lewis, who has defended me better than anyone else—I think—just about—on television consistently, which is a job from time to time. [*Laughter*]

I would like to make two or three points about why I think what you've done is important and why I want to urge you to continue to support the Democratic Party, to broaden our base, to reach out to new people, and to be especially vigilant in this election year.

First of all, there is a real difference between these two parties. There is a difference on specific issues. Look at what we're debating today, gun safety. Last night I called Governor Glendening and Lieutenant Governor Kathleen Kennedy Townsend in Maryland to congratulate them on passing their legislation regarding child safety locks and other protections. It didn't have anything to do with people hunting in Maryland. They'll still have a duck hunting season this fall in Maryland, I'll bet you anything. And all the dire predictions of the NRA will be wrong, but kids will be safer. Massachusetts did the same thing.

We're different: We think we ought to close the gun show loophole. We think if you buy a handgun at a gun store and you have to get